

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action

2010-2015

Addressing Vulnerability, Climate Change and Protection Challenges

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Humanitarian Challenges

Recommitting to humanitarianism

Every year a growing number of people – currently around 300 million - are affected by natural and man-made crises resulting in a daily struggle for survival and safety. These challenges come in a variety of forms, from the sudden devastation of an earthquake, to the slow, crushing effects of drought, to the chaos and fear of being caught up in conflict. The scope and impact of these crises is worsening. The effects of the changing global climate are already being felt. Civilians are increasingly being targeted during conflict, bringing death, displacement, rape and torture to ordinary people. And the global economy and food prices are experiencing devastating shocks, leaving more people hungry and in need of aid.

Denmark is committed to working with partners around the world to confront these challenges, in order to help save lives, preserve people's dignity, protect human rights, prevent abuse and assist in breaking the cycle linking crises, vulnerability, and poverty. This first and foremost calls for a continued strong commitment to humanitarianism and international humanitarian principles. It also means overcoming the increasing restrictions on humanitarian action, due either to increasing violence against humanitarian aid workers, or to increasingly hostile state regulation of the action of international agencies – or to a combination of both these factors.

Denmark will use vulnerability reduction as a driver for more durable change; increase its response to climate change induced disasters; supporting innovative local protection initiatives; improve accountability to beneficiaries; and further improve cooperation with partners in line with the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles.

Increased vulnerability

Disasters resulting from natural hazards and armed conflict can affect all parts of society but often have a greater impact on vulnerable groups of people and their equitable access to assistance and protection, both in terms of immediate effects and as they attempt to recover in the longer term. In a given context, individuals or groups can be vulnerable due to their age, gender, religion, ethnicity, social status, disabilities or because of their lack of assets.

Crisis often keep the poor in poverty and make vulnerable groups even more likely to be affected by future crises.

People are vulnerable to crisis for many reasons related to the wider social, economic and political context in which they live. Corruption, exclusion, discrimination, displacement and poverty can all increase people's vulnerability, not only in relation to disasters resulting from natural hazards, but also in the context of conflict and violence. It is therefore vital to address the social, economic,

cultural and political causes of prolonged vulnerability in order to look beyond the immediate emergency and reach sustainable solutions for reducing vulnerability.

Climate change is increasing humanitarian need

Climate change is a threat to us all, but will have devastating consequences for the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. It is already disrupting weather systems, agricultural and livestock production, sea levels and ocean currents. Over the last five years some humanitarian agencies have seen a threefold increase in the number of responses required due mainly to weather related disasters.

Disasters can wipe out years of development in minutes or slowly degrade living conditions. People will increasingly be forced to leave their homes for areas where they can live safely away from drought, flooding or extreme weather patterns. Difficulty in accessing clean water presents an added burden for vulnerable communities, and affects particularly women and girls. Conflicts are also likely to increase as climate change worsens existing scarcities of resources such as water and farmland. All these factors will make the task of reducing global poverty even more difficult.

The urgency of climate-related disasters calls for a greater focus on mapping vulnerabilities, reducing risks and strengthening preparedness and response capacity at all levels both for sudden and slow onset disasters as well as more chronic disaster situations.

Civilians face death, displacement and abuse during conflict

Conflicts in today's world have a major impact on civilians. They are killed, injured and sometimes prevented from leaving or forced from their homes and livelihoods either as an indirect consequence of fighting, or increasingly as deliberate targets of war. Peoples human rights and humanitarian law are violated with impunity and the 'humanitarian space' required to help those in need is being eroded.

More civilians are subjected to sexual violence and abuse in many of the world's conflicts where this brutal crime is used deliberately to instil fear and to weaken resistance.

Today, over 35 million people have been forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods due to crises. Many of them become internally displaced, while others become refugees when crossing borders. Displacement patterns are becoming more complex. The main causes of current displacement are conflicts, climate change and extreme poverty, and to a growing extent, these causes are inter-related.

Increasingly people in countries no longer at war continue to experience violence and abuse in the turbulent periods following peace agreements, as stability gradually returns. Conflict frequently returns to such countries, leading to fragile and volatile situations for civilians for protracted periods.

These trends of increased violence against civilians and more complex displacement calls for more emphasis on protection of people affected by armed conflict.

Strategic objectives and priorities

This strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action sets out how Denmark intends to address the challenges outlined above. It sets out the overall objectives; outlines key directions and priorities for Danish action and outlines the instruments that will be used for turning strategy into action.

Objectives of Danish Humanitarian Action

The objectives of Denmark's humanitarian action are to save and protect lives, alleviate suffering and promote the dignity and rights of civilians in crisis situations; as well as to initiate recovery, build resilience to and prevent future crises by breaking the cycle between crises and vulnerability. Thereby, Denmark's humanitarian action contributes to improving human security and reducing poverty.

To this end, Denmark will with its partners reach out to the most vulnerable people in crisis situations, through:

- meeting the immediate and early recovery needs of those affected by natural disasters and promoting disaster risk reduction, and
- responding to the needs of people affected by armed conflict, and supporting prevention, resilience and early recovery efforts.

Further, Denmark will actively promote the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles as a basis for:

- building partnerships based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence; and
- providing appropriate, timely, coordinated and effective humanitarian assistance.

Humanitarian action is most effective when it takes a holistic approach – stressing prevention as well as preparedness and emergency response, as well as links to longer term sustainable development. It is recognised that the traditional time-bound, sequential phases of preparedness, response and recovery should be replaced by an approach where these three dimensions can work side by side and with respect for each other.

Guiding principles for Denmark's humanitarian action

Danish humanitarian action is guided by the vision and principles embedded in the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid adopted in December 2007, including in particular The Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles (GHD)

Denmark respects and is committed to comply with International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law and Refugee Law, and thus fully respects and promotes the principles of humanitarian action:

Humanity: Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population. The dignity of all victims must be respected and protected.

Neutrality: Humanitarian aid must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute.

Impartiality: Humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations. Impartiality also implies making choices to favour those most likely to benefit from lifesaving aid.

Independence: The autonomy of humanitarian objectives from political, economic, military or other objectives must be observed, thus serving to ensure that the sole purpose of humanitarian aid remains to relieve and prevent the suffering of victims of humanitarian crises.

Strategic Directions

Vulnerability

- ✓ Denmark will assist, protect and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable during crisis.
- ✓ Denmark will address the underlying causes of vulnerability through building better links between relief and development.
- ✓ Denmark will prioritize women's empowerment, risk reduction, emergency preparedness and early recovery as key instruments for vulnerability reduction.

Disasters, such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes as well as armed conflict often have devastating effects on people and communities. The scale of the crisis, however, is not a given. The impact of a particular hazard depends on how vulnerable people and communities are.

Poverty, inequality and group grievance, lack of security and public goods, poor governance, human rights abuses, urbanization, environmental degradation, climate change and global epidemics such as HIV/AIDS all contribute to increased vulnerability.

People most affected by crisis find it progressively harder to recover due to loss of their assets and livelihoods, impaired physical and psychological health, and the destruction of the social, economic and political fabric of society. In addition, social and cultural discriminatory norms can lead to the exclusion of certain groups and individuals from humanitarian assistance and their increased exposure to abuse and violence. Furthermore, people and communities find their traditional coping mechanisms inadequate and unsuitable to deal with new hazards from climate change. Suffering from one crisis will make them more vulnerable to the next and they are trapped in a downward spiral from which it is difficult to escape.

A vulnerability focus for Denmark's humanitarian action aims to break this cycle. This means where possible addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability before and during crisis and channelling support to the most vulnerable during crisis in ways that build on existing local capacities and that strengthen their resilience to future crisis and shocks. This requires a holistic approach, including long-term development efforts, diplomacy, security, justice in addition to humanitarian action.

Strategic priorities:

- **Advocacy for IHL and human rights** Denmark will promote respect for humanitarian law and the rights of people in need with a special focus on vulnerable groups whose rights are being violated. Donors, coordinating and implementing organisations should engage in dialogue with international actors, governments, authorities and other parties.
- **Focusing emergency responses on the most vulnerable** In acute emergencies, Denmark will consistently assess appeals and identify activities, which prioritize the most vulnerable groups. Selection of partners will increasingly be driven by their ability to reach and build the resilience of the most vulnerable even during crisis. An example of this could be partners working on education in crises, child friendly spaces, psycho-social support, and prevention of violence against women and children. Further, Denmark will engage in dialogue with partners on how to strengthen focus on vulnerability, including on marginalised groups, displaced people and persons with disabilities.
- **Prioritizing gender sensitive approaches and women's empowerment.** Extreme levels of female poverty worldwide, most notably in Africa, have increased women's and girl's vulnerability during disaster and conflict. Women's reproductive health and rights are at stake in crisis situations and it is important to ensure access to obstetric care and crucial reproductive health supplies. Gender equality and the empowerment of women will be a key element in Denmark's efforts to reducing the vulnerability of all to the effects of disaster and conflict.
- **Use of improved data gathering, contextual analysis and needs assessment.** Funding and other important decisions related to humanitarian action must be based on strong evidence and analysis. In cooperation with UN and EU, Denmark will improve the quality and use of contextual analysis and needs assessment. Contextual analyses of vulnerability will inform operational choices in both disasters and conflict. Capacity for crisis monitoring and context specific analysis will be augmented in relation to natural disasters. In situations of conflict, strategic and operational choices will be based on a thorough conflict and rights based analysis to ensure that the response is appropriate, sufficiently comprehensive in time and space and potentially harmful side-effects are avoided.
- **Supporting preparedness and emergency management.** Effective disaster preparedness and contingency planning based on local and national platforms can save lives and reduce vulnerability as can capacity building for improved response. They include measures such as training and education, public education, evacuation and warning systems, and provision of relief and shelter. Denmark will work with partner countries and organisations to integrate such planning into development priorities in high-risk countries.

Vulnerability

The term **vulnerability** means susceptibility to harm from hazards. The impact of a particular hazard depends on how vulnerable people are to it. Hazards can be natural occurrences such as earthquakes or floods, or the effects of conflict.

Depending on the specific social, economic and political context in which they find themselves, women, children, the elderly and disabled, displaced people and marginalised groups are often the most vulnerable to hazards.

Humanitarian action should take steps not to undermine future development as this will tend to increase vulnerability.

- **Giving greater importance to early recovery.** Early recovery needs to be an integrated part of emergency responses. Even during crisis and long before peace is in sight opportunities can be found for restoring the capacity of local institutions, improving livelihoods, rule of law, and delivering basic social services. Early recovery builds on local ownership, respect for local priorities and capacities, participatory approaches and sustainability. Denmark will support such initiatives when appropriate – in particular through the Regions of Origins Initiative (see box) - and will continue to promote efforts through the UN, World Bank and EU to strengthen strategic planning, capacity building and financing for early recovery.

Early Recovery

The overall focus of early recovery is to urgently restore the capacity of national institutions and communities affected by conflict or natural disaster. It encompasses a broad range of needs in areas such as livelihoods, transitional shelter, education, governance, security and rule of law, environment and other socio-economic dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations. It aims to kick-start nationally owned processes for post-crisis recovery that are sustainable, seek to improve community capacity through rebuilding efforts ("build back better"), strengthen human security and address the underlying causes of the crisis to avoid future relapse.

Gender in crisis

Integration of gender in humanitarian action means recognizing the different needs, capacities and contributions of women, girls, boys and men and the relations between them. Ignoring these differences can have serious implications for the protection and survival of people being caught up in humanitarian crisis.

Gender equality priorities, must be incorporated into advocacy and strategic planning in the development, humanitarian, peace, and security spheres. Often the inclusion of both women and men is crucial for successfully addressing gender inequalities, whereas in other situations targeted interventions may have more effect. In situations of conflict implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 is crucial for protection of women and girls against violence – including sexual violence, and for the inclusion of women in peace processes and in rebuilding their lives after conflict.

Partnerships need to be built with organisations which can maximize impact on gender and advance the gender agenda in the international humanitarian system. Support should also be provided for gender disaggregated data collection.

Climate change and natural hazards

- ✓ Denmark will give greater priority to meeting the increasing humanitarian needs resulting from climate change
- ✓ Denmark will – as part of its support for climate change adaptation - increase its development assistance for disaster risk reduction, giving priority to countries that are high-risk and low income
- ✓ Denmark will increase its emphasis on reducing the vulnerability of populations affected by slow-onset and chronic disasters.

Climate change will have a long-term and permanent effect on human vulnerability. It is well understood that the main actors concerned with mitigating the effects of climate change through reduction of greenhouse gas emissions are states and the private sector. However, it needs to be better understood that the humanitarian community has an important role to play in terms of advocacy and highlighting the dangers for vulnerable populations. As host of the UN Climate Change conference in 2009, Denmark feels a particular responsibility to address the humanitarian impacts of climate change. Humanitarian organisations point to the fact that climate change is already happening, and millions of people are suffering the consequences. Climate-related disasters are on the rise and the effect of climate change is already straining the disaster relief system. Humanitarian actors, in collaboration with other partners, have a significant responsibility, within the larger climate change adaptation and risk reduction agenda, to strengthen their own preparedness capabilities, and to assist through coordinated and integrated approaches regional, national, and local actors in adapting to, and coping with, the changing climate.

Disaster risk reduction is the first line of defence against disasters. The World Bank has calculated, that it costs seven times more to respond to a disaster resulting from natural hazards than to prevent its impact through risk reduction. It is in any case preferable to reduce the effect of disasters on vulnerable people in advance than for them to suffer injury, death and trauma, and then have to rebuild their lives. However, when disaster hits, response must be swift.

There is more time to plan and implement an appropriate response in a slow-onset disaster such as drought. Yet the humanitarian system often does not intervene until the crisis stage. Slow-onset disasters do not always demand humanitarian intervention, but when they do it is important to remember that many communities have dealt with periodic or cyclical drought their entire lives. Humanitarian and development efforts should try to support these coping strategies, thereby strengthening a community's resilience.

The Danish approach to preparing for and responding to natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and floods will focus on the twin tracks of risk reduction and response, within the broader framework of vulnerability. People affected by natural disasters suffer injury, trauma and death, loss of their homes and livelihoods. However, it is important to acknowledge, that the first response is always local. The need to reach out to community level is also underscored by the fact that there is an increase in localised minor disasters.

Strategic priorities:

- ***Better monitoring, analysis of and advocacy about trends.*** It needs to be fully understood how communities cope with adverse circumstances that are linked to climate change and disasters resulting from natural hazards in general, in order to prioritize and direct global responses. This is important both in terms of slow-onset (chronic vulnerability) and sudden-onset disasters. Denmark's voice for climate change action will be used to promote greater awareness of the human and other costs being borne by communities in high risk and weak adaptive circumstances.
- ***More funding available for responding to natural disasters.*** Recognising the devastating impact of natural disasters, Denmark will increase the proportion of its humanitarian funding allocated to responses related to sudden onset crisis.
- ***Improved funding mechanisms for timely response.*** Sudden onset disasters call for funds to be available without delay. Funding will be provided to partners who can provide the fastest relief. Denmark will work with UN organisations and IFRC to enable them to take action immediately before a disaster hits and thus save lives and reduce disaster impacts. When disasters strike in a Danish programme country, flexibility will be introduced to allow development funding to be reallocated to assist response efforts in agreement with partners. Humanitarian funding up to 300.000 DKK will also continue to be available through Danish embassies for small quick response activities.
- ***Supporting operational preparedness of partners.*** Humanitarian actors will themselves need to develop policies and operational changes in order to adapt to climate change. Humanitarian actors should help build up early warning-early action systems. When possible, humanitarian agencies should send out appeals prior to expected disasters in order to support action before disaster strikes. Denmark will continue to support the efforts of partners to upgrade their operational preparedness for climate change, i.e. through support to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Climate Change.
- ***Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.*** Denmark will give priority to assist disaster-prone countries in enhancing their disaster management and risk reduction capacity. In Danish programme countries climate screening of existing programmes and climate-proofing of new initiatives will accelerate risk reduction effort according to the 2007 Guidelines for Disaster Risk Reduction in Danish Development and Humanitarian Assistance.
- ***Promoting International Disaster Response Laws, Rules and Principles.*** When natural disasters occur and assistance is needed, it often becomes a problem that no international law exists to facilitate and regulate international relief. The lack of international law commonly leads to unnecessary bureaucratic bottlenecks slowing

The Hyogo Framework of Action 2005-2015

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction was held from 18 to 22 January 2005 in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, and countries adopted the following priorities for action:

1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.
2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.
3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.
4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.
5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

the entry and distribution of relief, as well as to poor quality and coordination from some international providers. As a result of these problems disaster stricken communities often do not receive the right aid at the right time. Denmark was active in designing the International Disaster Response Laws Guidelines from 2007 and will continue to promote these guidelines that advise governments on how best to prepare their legal and institutional frameworks for accepting international disaster assistance when it is needed.

- **Better food assistance and food security.** Food aid can save lives and support livelihoods as has been seen during the recent food crisis. Food aid distributions need to be well targeted – to the right people in the right way – and well timed to avoid undermining local markets, for example by coinciding with harvest time. Local and regional purchase of food aid reduces the cost and delivery time, and may also help local producers and enable market creation for food commodities, thus vastly improving the resilience and food security of communities in the long-term. Where local or regional markets can provide enough food and food insecurity is a result of lack of purchasing power, cash grants and vouchers can work. The use of a specific tool at various stages of a crisis should be determined by a thorough analysis of the local context with a vulnerability focus. Denmark will work with partners such as WFP and relevant NGOs to provide life-saving food and nutrition during crisis as well as improved livelihood and food security.
- **Protection is also important in natural disasters.** Protection is not only relevant in connection with armed conflict, but also highly relevant in relation to natural disasters. Natural disasters often result in displacement and break-down of social protection structures, making people vulnerable to violence and abuse. However, protection is not given the necessary attention by humanitarian actors in natural disasters. Denmark will work with partners to strengthen awareness and improve coordination related to the issue and support disaster related protection activities.
- **International partnerships for risk reduction.** Funding will be made available to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) and its members, the IFRC and facilities such as the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes parts of country-level poverty reduction strategies. Denmark will actively advocate for improved country-level coordination and division of labour between organisations involved in supporting disaster risk reduction activities.

Protecting conflict affected populations

- ✓ Denmark will continue to give high priority to protection of civilians in armed conflicts.
- ✓ Denmark will advocate for adherence to international humanitarian law, including in particular unrestricted humanitarian access.
- ✓ Denmark will put particular focus on combating gender-based violence
- ✓ Denmark will promote durable solutions for displaced populations through comprehensive means

Violent conflicts that take place within states dominate the global conflict environment. With the reduction in traditional armed and organised military warfare, civilians have increasingly become targets rather than just victims, and this has manifested itself in grave violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

Armed conflicts often result in civilians being trapped in conflict zones with little or no possibility of fleeing. Some conflicts also result in large numbers of displaced populations that are unable to return to their homes for decades. Displacement patterns are becoming more complex. People who are fleeing conflict often travel alongside migrants and often face the same insecurity and risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, including torture and human trafficking. This trend is reinforced by climate change-induced displacement. Increasingly, displaced people settle in urban settings outside traditional camps and can be difficult to reach. When a solution is to be found they may be reluctant to return to their rural place of origin.

The Danish approach to protection of civilians is based on the global framework of international humanitarian law, human rights law, refugee law and the guiding principles on internal displacement. The concerns, priorities and self-protection actions of at-risk individuals and communities will - whenever possible - be the starting point for activities supported by Denmark. Protection activities are carried out before, during and after conflict, and hence include prevention, conflict response, early recovery, and longer term development interventions.

Protection

The concept of protection encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law. In other words, protection refers to any activity that aims at creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation.

Strategic priorities:

- ***Conflict prevention and mediation to hinder violence and instability.*** Preventing unstable and fragile situations from deteriorating into conflict is the most effective means of protection. Denmark will continue to support development programmes such as the Africa Programme for Peace as well as strategic interventions through the UN or specialized actors that aim to reduce tension, enhance dialogue and mediation, and increase harmony by building on pockets of peace.
- ***Global advocacy on humanitarian access.*** Access is a prerequisite for the ability of impartial humanitarian organizations to assist in protection and life saving activities. Denmark will strengthen its use of humanitarian diplomacy as an active tool for humanitarian access to people at risk. When humanitarian access is being denied, Denmark will react and work for joint international action through the European Union and other relevant forums. Denmark will also work for improved protection and safety for humanitarian aid workers, especially national staff.
- ***Implementing the Responsibility to Protect***
Denmark actively participates in the ongoing efforts to put the concept of R2P into practice, acknowledging that developing countries and regional organisations such as the African Union have a crucial role to play. Denmark supports the UN Secretary Generals three pillar strategy for advancing R2P: Recognise that protection is first and foremost the responsibility of the State; commit to assisting States in meeting their obligations through capacity building; and support timely, decisive and peaceful response when a State is failing to provide protection to its citizens. Denmark will support the UN's efforts to undertake preventive efforts through implementation of the first two pillars, thereby underlining not only the responsibility to protect, but even more so the responsibility to prevent.
- ***Building capacities for protection.*** Recognizing the evolving nature of the protection agenda, its increasing importance and the relative nascent quality of many agencies engaged with protection, Denmark will support the development of capacity and competency related to protection. Denmark acknowledges that local NGOs are often more capable of operating when humanitarian space is restricted and have better access to vulnerable populations in remote areas.
- ***Promoting protection from Gender-Based Violence.*** Denmark is committed to working for an increased focus on prevention of and response to gender based violence in conflict and crisis situations. Women and girls are especially vulnerable but also boys and men are subject to sexual violence. Protection against violence and abuse must be included as relevant in all protection work and humanitarian interventions. Denmark will work with a broad range of partners such as UNFPA, MSF and ICRC to mainstream protection from gender-based violence into all humanitarian action. Further, Denmark actively supports the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and development.

The Responsibility to Protect – R2P

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) relates to the legal obligation of states to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and their incitement. If the state cannot or is unwilling to protect its citizens, it is the responsibility of the international community to do so.

- **Strengthening Child Protection.** Creating safe places for children and adolescents reducing their vulnerability and enhancing their empowerment through comprehensive child protection activities is a priority for Denmark. Providing education to conflict affected children will be of particular importance in order to prevent entire generations of children from losing out. It is also a key intervention for reducing vulnerability and preventing children from being recruited as child soldiers or subjected to violence and sexual exploitation. Support will be given to response measures such as psycho social care, and family reunification efforts. Important partners on child protection are UNICEF, Save the Children and also ICRC and IFRC.
- **Addressing complex challenges related to displacement and forced migration.** Humanitarian actors need to continue adapting to current and future changes in displacement. Mixed migration, trafficking, and climate change-induced displacement constitute new challenges for the existing legal framework, and in respect of traditional protection activities. UNHCR remains a key partner in Denmark's protection work, but other protection agencies including UNRWA and ICRC and Danish NGO's with qualified protection staff are also important protection partners.
- **Strengthened protection of refugees and IDP's.** Together with partners, Denmark will seek to strengthen the existing protection framework and support innovative ways of reaching out to IDP's and refugees with an aim of finding durable solutions. Denmark will continue its active support to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol. However, existing conventions do not address the protection needs of IDP's. The number of internally displaced people is alarmingly high, and their protection needs continue to pose an enormous humanitarian challenge that is yet to be properly addressed by the international community. Together with likeminded donors, UN and NGO partners, Denmark will work for increased support to IDP's, as well as engage in dialogue with the governments that have the primary responsibility to protect their own citizens.
- **Durable solutions as the end goal.** Finding durable solutions for refugees and IDP's is the ultimate protection goal. It is achieved when a refugee or an IDP again receives the full protection of a state and enjoys all basic rights and opportunities to the same extent as other permanent residents in a country. No matter whether this is achieved through return to the area of origin or through local integration, the key element is frequently to promote sustainable livelihoods. Denmark will support this by focusing on activities that foster self reliance and local ownership both among returnees and recipient communities and through seeking to ensure that this key objective is reflected in local and national development plans. The Region of Origin Initiative has proven to be a particularly useful vehicle for such efforts. Key partners include UNHCR, the Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid and IOM.

Children at risk

Children in conflict and crisis are particularly at risk of violence, exploitation and abuse given their level of dependence, their limited ability to protect themselves, and their limited power.

Displacement and separation from family add further to children's vulnerability. The effects can be devastating; children are abducted, orphaned, forcibly recruited as child soldiers, sexually abused and subject to trafficking and all forms of slavery. Denmark supports the implementation of SCR 1612 and the UN SC working group on children and armed conflict.

Regions of Origin Initiative

Denmark developed the "Regions of Origin Initiative (ROI)" to meet the challenge of displacement-related needs in protracted conflicts where appropriate international assistance falls in a grey zone between humanitarian action and development interventions. The initiative builds upon UNHCR's Framework for Durable Solutions. It focuses on the context-specific needs of displaced persons, their host communities and the areas or communities they will permanently return to or settle in. The activities under the ROI focus on protection and livelihoods with a particular focus on promoting durable solutions.

The initiative incorporates the regional dimensions of displacement situations and emphasises participation of target groups including host communities and relevant partners in planning and implementation. The initiative's purpose is to bridge between humanitarian and development assistance. The initiative also aims specifically to link its activities to broader national/international humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in recognition that ROI is only one of many parts of the efforts to achieve durable solutions and recovery. The initiative gives priority to areas of high vulnerability; areas where the capacity to absorb IDPs or refugees is very low, areas/countries coming out of conflict, and areas affected by mixed migratory movements.

- **Supporting mine action.** The presence of mines, unexploded ordnance (UXO), cluster ammunitions and the presence of illicit small arms often presents a significant obstacle to the resumption of social and economic activities and development following a conflict due to lack of security and safety. Hence, mine action, including mine risk education, is an important element of humanitarian interventions as a mean to protect civilians affected by armed conflict during and after a conflict. Mine action is in many instances a prerequisite for other kinds of humanitarian and development activities and is essential in building confidence and in promoting peace and stability. Denmark will in accordance with its Mine Action Strategy adopted in 2006 advocate that those responsible for leaving UXOs behind are also responsible for clearing them and will also ensure that mine action where needed is an integral part of post-conflict recovery.
- **Promoting international guidelines for humanitarian-military coordination.** In line with the international guidelines (in particular the Oslo and MCDA guidelines), Denmark views the use of military assets in humanitarian action as a last resort when no corresponding civilian resources are available. Denmark also recognizes the essential role of the military in providing security and protection for civilians. The increasing number and scale of humanitarian emergencies, in both natural disaster and conflict settings, has led to more situations where military forces and civilian relief agencies are operating in the same environment. In these situations Denmark promotes dialogue and interaction between humanitarian and military actors to protect and promote the humanitarian principles and ensure the necessary distinction between humanitarian and military activities.

Coordinated, principled and informed humanitarian action

- ✓ Denmark will actively support the central and overall coordinating role of the United Nations, in promoting a coherent international response to humanitarian crises.
- ✓ Denmark will work for full adherence to the GHD principles.
- ✓ Denmark will deepen and strengthen its humanitarian action and focus on a limited number of protracted crises situations.

Many changes are underway in international humanitarian response. The three main elements of the humanitarian reform are more predictable humanitarian financing; strengthening response capacity; and better support to field coordination. It is an ambitious effort by the international humanitarian community to reach more beneficiaries, with more comprehensive needs-based relief and protection, in a more effective and timely manner.

Denmark is an active member of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative that was created in 2003 with an aim of achieving efficient and principled humanitarian assistance. The GHD initiative is endorsed by OECD/DAC as a harmonisation initiative in line with the Paris Declaration. GHD provides a forum for donors to discuss good practice in humanitarian financing and other shared concerns. By defining principles and standards it provides both a framework to guide official humanitarian aid and a mechanism for encouraging greater donor accountability.

Denmark's commitment to GHD reflects its belief that collective, coordinated action will benefit the response to humanitarian need on the ground through policy discussions and harmonisation.

Strategic priorities:

- **Global efforts to improve crisis management and humanitarian action.** Denmark will strengthen its voice in the humanitarian reform process and be an active, critical partner for the UN agencies with a view to improving their effectiveness and capacity. Emphasis will be put on strengthened financing mechanisms at all levels; improved country level planning, coordination and leadership for protection and early recovery; and strengthening the humanitarian system's ability to address vulnerability and adapt gender sensitive approaches.
- **EU coordination, coherence and complementarity.** The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid provides a common vision that guides the action of the EU, both at its Member States and Community levels. Denmark will work to strengthen EU coordination and promotion of best practice. There should be a particular focus on coherence of response strategies to a given crisis, and on working in partnership in the field. Denmark intends to take active part in the Council working group on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid (COHAFA) and strengthen its dialogue with EU member states and ECHO.
- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships.** To improve global cooperation for prevention, response and early recovery, Denmark will actively encourage stronger policy and operational partnerships between UN and Bretton Woods Institutions, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, EU and other regional bodies, and last but not least NGOs.
- **National coordination and planning.** In Denmark planning and coordination of humanitarian action will continue to be carried out with a new and strengthened mandate, through regular

meetings of the Humanitarian Contact Group (HCG), in which all Danish public and private organisations in the humanitarian field are members. The HCG will advise on the implementation of the Strategy for Danish Humanitarian Action.

- **Predictable funding.** Partners are able to respond more effectively when their funding is predictable and when administrative procedures are not burdensome. Denmark will pursue predictability through timely core and other contributions with little or no earmarking. Contributions will be disbursed as agreed and on time and multi-year planning will be introduced where possible.
- **Availability of early and flexible contributions to new and existing crises.** Timely response requires that donors make funds available to implementing partners even before disaster strikes. Denmark wants to make greater use of emergency response funds managed by the UN, the IFRC and Danish Humanitarian NGOs. The ambition is to remain amongst the large donors to the CERF and become a top donor to the DREF. In addition, Denmark will preposition a share of available humanitarian funding with effective Danish humanitarian NGOs.
- **Context-specific information about needs and operational performance.** Humanitarian funding should be allocated in proportion to needs and on the basis of context analysis and needs assessments. Denmark will work with partners to strengthen the quality, consistency and wide applicability of agency needs assessments, including through joint agency approaches and incorporating gender and vulnerability dimensions. Denmark wants to strengthen knowledge about actual needs and vulnerabilities and increase its ability to determine the most appropriate and effective operational response.
- **More selective and deeper engagement in protracted crises.** A considerable part of Danish humanitarian funding will continue to be allocated towards long-term humanitarian operation in protracted and complex emergencies. Denmark will each year update the list of crises, which will be given priority attention. This list will normally not exceed 10 crisis situations. Around 2/3 will be in Africa. In protracted crises, where Denmark's engagement goes beyond humanitarian assistance the specific engagement will be guided by comprehensive strategies developed by relevant stakeholders.

Strengthening partnerships

- ✓ Denmark will introduce Partnership Framework Agreements with selected humanitarian partners.
- ✓ Denmark will work for increased burden-sharing and division of labour between humanitarian donors.
- ✓ Denmark will increase its field level capacity for strengthened humanitarian engagement in selected regions.

Denmark can only achieve its humanitarian objectives by working closely with and through a range of different partners. Some partners will assist in implementing Denmark's humanitarian assistance, while others will contribute to coordination, provide technical input, or be allies in advocacy.

In line with commitments to international humanitarian law, Denmark recognises a responsibility not to compromise the neutrality and independence of humanitarian partners. Their working practices and interpretations of core humanitarian principles are fully respected.

Denmark aims to build mutually beneficial partnerships with a range of partners and at the same time reduce the total number of partnerships for enhanced dialogue and support. Partners are selected primarily based on their adherence to humanitarian standards and codes of conduct, their ability to reach and engage vulnerable beneficiaries in all phases of their activities, past performance and cost effectiveness.

Strategic priorities:

- ***Strategic partnerships with key organizations.*** The cooperation with key implementing partners will be guided by partnership framework agreements (PFAs). These agreements aim to give the implementing partners higher funding predictability and operational flexibility in exchange for better planning and clear performance targets against the priorities of this Strategy. Agreements will be subject to ongoing dialogue and annual reviews. A number of PFAs will be concluded in the first implementation year of the strategy. Candidate organizations are UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid and the Red Cross and Crescent family. Other organisations may follow based on the initial experiences gained.
- ***Long-term partnership with UN humanitarian partners.*** The UN organisations have a central position in Danish humanitarian assistance due to their global response capacity, technical expertise, normative role and privileged relationships under international law. OCHA plays a growing role in coordinating their efforts. In recognition of this role and the many new tasks given to OCHA, Denmark will increase its core support for OCHA and advocate for additional resources to be made available for them from other sources, including a larger contribution from the UN general budget.
- ***Collaboration with NGOs.*** Humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are by far the largest providers of humanitarian assistance worldwide and a vital part of Danish humanitarian action. Experienced NGOs have an extensive depth of technical expertise, knowledge of specific contexts and how to deliver appropriate programmes to the most vulnerable people. Denmark will work with a range of humanitarian NGOs and develop

strategic partnership framework agreements with some. Funds for sudden emergencies will be pre-positioned with a select few organisations.

- ***The unique roles of the ICRC and IFRC and national societies.*** The organisations of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement occupy an important position within humanitarian action. The ICRC is the most important individual player in efforts to ensure that the humanitarian system is based on international humanitarian law. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) also plays a particularly important role in disaster preparedness, early warning, response and risk reduction. Denmark will strengthen the tripartite cooperation between the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Danish Red Cross and the ICRC/IFRC.
- ***Strengthened relations with donor partners.*** Denmark will explore avenues and take lead for better division of labour and collaboration with other bilateral donors. Denmark aims to work strategically with other donors through thematic or geographical division of labour between donors, joint or coordinated programming and organisational strategies, joint monitoring of partners, working on joint evaluations and through the forums of donor support groups for key agencies. The DAC Fragile States network (INCAF) is of particular relevance to Denmark's humanitarian action, as are the findings of DAC Peer reviews which include humanitarian action. The GHD donor group is another important forum for increasing donor's performance against the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles. Denmark will maintain close discussions with donor colleagues internationally to coordinate the meeting of global funding needs for humanitarian action.
- ***Involvement of affected countries, communities and beneficiaries.*** In all crises the sovereign government has the primary responsibility for the safety of its citizens. This means the international community should seek to align their work with national and local authorities wherever this is consistent with the primary aim of assisting and protecting those in need. This also means working through partners and national civil society to build the capacity of affected national and local authorities and institutions to address vulnerability and humanitarian needs. The involvement of Danish representations in affected countries is central to this aim. The aim is to assign up to 5 humanitarian experts to selected representations or field offices to strengthen Denmark's capacity for local engagement with partners. Denmark will also include beneficiary involvement as a criterion for selection of partner organisations.
- ***The Danish Emergency Management Agency (DEMA).*** DEMA is a civil protection actor for the Danish state. Internationally its expertise is in rapid response, utilising the agency's national resources by sending out teams and equipment modules to assist with humanitarian crises overseas. DEMA was a founding member of the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) in which seven European countries collaborate to provide logistical support to UN humanitarian operations through standard equipment modules and expertise. DEMA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will continue to work in tandem when the Danish state responds to crises.
- ***The International Humanitarian Services (IHB).*** Recent history in the Balkans, in Asia, in Africa and elsewhere has shown that the international community needs to strengthen its capacity to better intervene in humanitarian crises and violent conflicts more quickly and efficiently. Civilians play an increasing important role in delivery of aid and play a fundamental role in complex emergencies, conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Upon request, Denmark will provide experts for widely different tasks in particular all the hot spots of the world at a short notice. Danes who are dispatched to assist in humanitarian action are recruited through several different standby rosters.

The International Humanitarian Service (IHB)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established in 1995 a personnel pool that at present consists of approximately 350 experts within a wide range of competencies in Rule of Law, human rights, mission support, water and sanitation, logistics, management etc., in order to undertake different kinds of assignments from monitoring to high level management. The experts who are on the standby rosters and dispatched are selected on the basis of their professional and personal qualifications. The aim is that their competences should be regularly updated, by means of courses and exercises in Denmark and abroad in cooperation with international actors, EU, UN, Red Cross and NGOs. There are, in addition, the standby rosters of the Danish aid agencies: The Danish Red Cross, The Danish Refugee Council and Medicines sans Frontiers. The Police Force and The Danish Emergency Management Service also have a standby roster. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs finances the preparedness of the three Danish aid agencies and together they can muster more than 600 Danes with different kinds of expertise. They can be deployed at short notice to serve during humanitarian and emergency actions as well as in reconstruction activities. Postings can vary from a couple of weeks to as much as a year.

Focus on results, innovation and communications

- ✓ Denmark will focus on the impact of its humanitarian action and strengthen accountability to beneficiaries.
- ✓ Denmark will promote innovation and best practises in humanitarian action.
- ✓ Denmark will regularly communicate assistance provided and results achieved.

Denmark is committed to focus on the impact of its humanitarian action and to ensuring accountability to its stakeholders. These include in particular those affected by humanitarian action but also parliamentary and public stakeholders in Denmark, as well as other national and international partners. Furthermore, focus will be on best practices in the delivery of aid – on issues such as cost efficiency, local partnerships, participatory approaches, accountability, and not least the quality of implementing capacity, including financial management

Strategic priorities:

- **Placing greater emphasis on results.** Reporting is to be focused on documenting whether Danish humanitarian action is meeting the needs of people affected by crises. This entails shifting the emphasis from output reporting to reporting on results and impacts. Further, reporting requirements should respect the burden it places on partners and beneficiaries and thus be as focused as possible while living up to the requirements of participating donors and organisations. In line with this, Denmark will continue working with other donors to harmonise reporting requirements.
- **Developing a new system of monitoring.** Denmark will support organisations in developing monitoring and reporting systems that to the greatest extent possible are participatory and inclusive in approach. This is done in order to help strengthen accountability towards beneficiaries. Similarly, Denmark will work with partners to explore other measures that enhance accountability and to promote certification under the *Humanitarian Accountability Partnership* (HAP).
- **Promoting learning and innovation.** Denmark will partner with research institutions that can assist in promoting learning and innovation within the humanitarian community at large, as a contribution to strengthening the efficiency and impact of humanitarian action. The partnerships will be longer term and will be subject of joint strategic planning. The choice of partners will take its point of departure in the strategic priorities set out in this strategy.
- **Initiating and supporting relevant evaluations and joint thematic reviews.** Denmark will work with partners and others in organising joint evaluations and reviews in support of funding decisions as well as general improvements in assistance quality and impact. This will be supplemented by the fielding of monitoring missions by the MFA and relevant staff from embassies or representations.
- **Strengthening public diplomacy in respect of humanitarian action.** In line with the commitment to accountability and in order to strengthen public support for humanitarian action, Denmark will regularly communicate assistance provided and results achieved. This

communication will aim at demonstrating the results of Danish humanitarian action on communities affected by crises. Denmark will use up to two percent of its humanitarian budget on communication activities. Communication will be undertaken in cooperation with Denmark's humanitarian partners, and funds for communication activities will be included as part of the partnership framework agreements.

Strategy Implementation

Timeframe

This strategy will be implemented between January 2010 and December 2015. Some strategic priorities can only be fully addressed once tools, guidelines, partnerships and resources are developed or in place. Initiation of implementation will therefore be spread over a period of time. Between the official launch of the strategy during 2009 and the end of the year an action plan will be developed and some initial tool development will take place.

Action planning

The action plan will indicate when and with which means the strategic priorities will be addressed. Some strategic priorities will be addressed throughout the lifespan of the strategy; others will be addressed through smaller time-bound interventions. For each strategic priority the action plan will include the following:

Strategic priority	Action	Baseline	Indicator of success	Resources	Timeframe	Achievement

The action plan will be updated once a year, and once developed be presented to the Humanitarian Contact Group.

Review and evaluation

Implementation of the strategy will be subject to an independent mid-term review in 2012 and an evaluation in 2015. The review and evaluation will also be presented to the Humanitarian Contact Group.